**MUS 320b: Jazz and Pop Arranging**
**M, W & F 11:00-11:50 - 3 credit hours**
**Fall Semester 2017**
**Brian Post Instructor**
**Music-A- 102**
**Office Phone 826-5438**
**Email: jbp5@humboldt.edu**
**Office Hours: TBA**

. If you are unable to meet with me during my regularly scheduled office hours, I will be happy to set a meeting time that will work for you. Please do not hesitate to come and talk to me when you feel the need or call me at 826-5438. Before contacting me please be sure to read the syllabus, which has answers to a number of common questions. Feel free to stop by my office any time my door is open (if my door is closed at non-office-hour times I am probably grading, preparing classes, etc., so please do not disturb). I am happy to discuss anything covered in class, to answer questions about completed or nearly completed homework assignments (before the due date), to review graded homework assignments before revisions, etc. However, I will NOT re-teach material covered in class on a day you were absent; it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.

**Course Materials**

Dick Lowell, Arranging for Large Jazz Ensemble, Berklee Press, 2003
William Russo, Composing For Jazz Orchestra - Optional
Blank book of 8.5 by 11 manuscript paper

**Course Description**

Jazz and pop arranging, will begin by focusing on the essentials of jazz theory, orchestration and musical styles. General voicing techniques, instrumental coloring, and transpositions will be discussed next. Followed by form of an arrangement, and the discussion of distinctions between, and techniques required of, an arranger when composing or arranging.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester you will develop a solid foundation in arranging by learning to work with the following concepts in a concrete sequential manner:

1. A basic voicing vocabulary that leads to a collection of techniques for sectional and ensemble voicings.

2. An awareness of balance and economy that leads to knowing when and how to reuse material and how to present something new.
3. An editing process that leads to discarding musical elements that do-not-serve a musical purpose in the arrangement.
4. An ability to experiment with form, style, voicing, and instrumental combinations that will lead to a unique and personal sound.
5. Understanding that arranging is practical, that music is for the ears, not the eyes. Arranging is not theory. If an arrangement is to be successful it must sound good.

**Music Department Assessment Goals and Outcomes**

Goal 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to hear, identify, and work conceptually with the elements of music – rhythm, melody, harmony, and structure.

Outcome 1A: Students can write harmonic progressions demonstrating correct voice-leading using standard elements of chromatic harmony including mixture, Neapolitans, Augmented Sixth chords, and enharmonic pivot chords.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate familiarity with, and an ability to perform a wide selection of musical literature representing principal eras, genres, and cultural sources**.**

Outcome 2A: Students can identify and trace essential developments in Western Art Music history.

Outcome 2B: When listening to an unfamiliar musical composition, students can identify its historical era, cultural sources, genre, texture, instrumentation, and possible composer when appropriate.

Outcome 2C: Over the course of four years, music majors will perform a wide variety of music – in solos, large and small ensembles, from different eras, in different styles

**Outcomes of an HSU education:**

This course explicitly contributes to your acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to these HSU Learning Outcomes:

Critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad knowledge base, and applying it to complex issues

Competence in a major area of study

Graduates will be prepared to;

Succeed in their chosen careers

Take responsibility for identifying personal goals and practicing lifelong learning

**Assignments**

Assignments may be done neatly, in pencil or on computer. Illegible assignments will not receive a grade. Incomplete assignments will not be accepted.

**Late Assignments**

Assignments that are handed in one class period late will have 5 points automatically deducted from the score. Assignments that are handed in 2 class periods late will have 10 points deducted from the score. Any assignment handed in more than two class periods late will not receive a grade.

**Assignment Re-dos**

An assignment may be redone if it is turned in by the following class period after it is returned to the student. A maximum high score for a redo will be 90 points instead of 100. Any missed points will be deducted from a 90-point total. **A late assignment may not be submitted as a redo**.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Any student found using another person's work as though that work were his/her own, or any student who knowingly permits another student to use his/her work shall be given a grade of **F** for the course.

**Class Attendance**

You are required to attend all classes. Attendance will be counted as 5% of the final grade. Each unexcused absence will result in the subtraction of 3 points from a possible 100 points for the semester. A written doctor's excuse will be required for all excused absences. Tours will be excused if I know about them in advance.

**Bringing Books To Class**

You are responsible for bringing the text, workbook and pertinent handouts to every class. Many times we will use both books within the span of one class period so please come prepared.

**Projected Course Schedule**

| Week | Chapter |
|---|---|
| **8/21** | Chapter 1 – Basic Information<br>Transposition of instruments<br>Instrument Ranges<br>Low Interval Limits<br>Special effects for Wind Instruments |

**Written assignments 1&2:**

- Appendix I pp. 32-33 - Exercises 1-3,

Due 8/25

- Appendix I pp. 10-13 - Exercises 1-8

Due 8/28

**8/28** Chapter 1 – Basic Information

Mechanical - Voicings

Re-harmonizing Approach Notes

1. Chromatic Approach
2. Scale Approach
3. Double Chromatic Approach
4. Indirect Resolution
5. Independent Lead

Chord Scales

Preparing a Score

Overview of an Arrangement

**Written assignments 3 & 4:**

- Appendix I, pp. 109 #1– Exercises a-d

Due 9/1

- Text p. 31, #2

Due 9/6

**9/6** Chapter 2 – Unison and Octave Writing

How and why to write in unison and octaves

Effects of instrumental combinations and timbres

High timbre examples in unison

Low timbre examples in unison

Octave doubling examples using different timbres

Dividing different phrases among instruments

Using unison and octave writing with counterpoint

Appendix II – General voicing Techniques

Unison and Octave voicings

Two Part Voicings

Three Part Voicings

**Written assignments 5 & 6:**

- Text pp. 45 – 48

Due 9/8

• Select a 32 bar, AABA form jazz standard and voice once for two parts then again for three parts. Write both arrangements using a grand staff.
Due 9/11

**9/11** Appendix II – General voicing Techniques
Four and Five Part Voicings
Voice Leading
Safe Low Limits

Chapter 3 - Concerted Writing with Mechanical Voicings
Procedure for basic concerted writing
Coupling the saxes to the brass
Range limits for lead instruments
4&4 examples with constant coupling, variable coupling, and full doubling
5&5, 7&5, 8&5 examples with constant, variable and mixed coupling
How to avoid repeated notes through editing, crossing voices and re-harmonization of approach tones

**Written assignments 7& 8:**
• Appendix II, p. 48 #5-6 only in four parts
Due 9/15

• Text p. 61 # 1 (make a copy of p. 61#2) as you will need it for the next assignment)
Due 9/18

**9/18** Chapter 3 - Concerted Writing with Mechanical Voicings
5&5, 7&5, 8&5 examples with constant, variable and mixed coupling
How to avoid repeated notes through editing, crossing voices and re-harmonization of approach tones

**Written assignments 9&10:**
• Text p. 61 #2
Due 9/22

• Text p. 62 #3-4
Due 9/25

**9/25** Chapter 4 – Spread Voicings

How and why to write spread voicings and how to control a spread's effect
Five-part spreads with a unison and a concerted melody
Using spreads in tutti writing for 5&5, 7&5, and 8&5

Chapter 5 – Voicings in Fourths
How to write voicings in fourths, with recommended lead ranges
Sample passages voiced in fourths for 4&4, 5&5, and 8&5

**Written assignments 11 & 12:**
• Text p. 71 #1 and p. 72 #3 - 5&5, and 8&5 Spread Voicings
Due 9/29

• Text p. 81 # 1&2 – Fourth Voicings for 4&4, 5&5
Due 10/2

**10/2** Chapter 6 – Upper Structure Triad Voicings
Defining the term upper structure and listing what triads will work for what types of chords
How to build voicings with upper structure triads and when to use them
4&4 example of upper structure triads in a "setup" and a concerted passage
5&5 concerted passage with supporting spreads
7&5 re-harmonized melody with variable and constant coupling
8&5 voicings for re-harmonizing dominant seventh chords

Chapter 7 – Voicings in Clusters
How to construct cluster voicings for large ensembles
4&4 example using clusters in brass counterpoint line
5&5 saxophone and brass counterpoint, each voiced in clusters
7&5 concerted melody voiced in clusters
8&5 cluster voicings for sustained texture and counter melody using woodwind doublings and muted brass

**Written assignments 13 & 14:**
• Text p. 93 & 94 Ex.#2-3 Upper Structure Voicings
Due 10/6

• Text p. 103 – Tone Clusters
Due 10/9

**10/9** Chapter 8 – Line writing
How to use line writing
Applying line writing to a 5-part sax soli, step by step
Line writing for 5&5 concerted passage
Building lines from the bottom up for maximum contrary motion
Creating a cascade effect in 5&5 passage

**ATTENTION - No late assignments due through 10/6 will be accepted after 10/13/2017**

**Written assignment 15:**
• Text p. 115
Due 10/16

**10/16** Chapter 9 – Woodwind Doubling and Muted Brass
Which woodwind instruments saxophonists commonly double, and how to write for them.
Five different brass mutes, how they sound, and practical considerations in writing for them
Standard applications

**Written assignment 16:**
• Text p.129 Ballad Arrangement for woodwinds and muted brass
Due 10/25

**10/23** Chapter 10 – Soli Writing
Writing the arranger's solo; recommended ranges for lead instruments
Two sax soli comparing mechanical voicings and line writing
Sample brass soli for seven, four and three parts

**Written assignments 17:**
• Text p. 137 – Sax Soli
Due 10/30

**10/30** Chapter 11 – Writing Backgrounds
Blues based riff background demonstrating call and response

Building backgrounds with guide tones, chord tones, and tensions
Compositional approach

Chapter 12 – Shout Choruses
Defining characteristics of a shout chorus
A brief guide to shout choruses on record
Analysis of shout chorus in "625 Swingerama Ave"

**Written assignment 18:**
• Text p. 155 #1
Due 11/6
• Select two or three possible charts for using on the final project described below. The instructor will discuss each chart with students individually on Mon. 11/6:
The Final Project will consist of a short big band arrangement of a piece of your choice. The arrangement needs to include an introduction (8 bars minimum), statement of the head, solo section with backgrounds (one solo minimum), soli section (8 bars minimum), shout section (8 bars minimum), restatement of the head, coda (8 bars minimum), complete score due in class the day of the student's scheduled read through time and parts are due at the scheduled read through session. The read thru dates and times for your arrangement to be performed by the P.M. Jazz Band will be announced.
Due in-class the day of your scheduled read-through session. **This assignment will not receive a grade if it is handed in late.**

**11/6** Approval of pieces for final projects
Inside the Score – Score analysis

**11/13** Inside the Score – Score analysis

**11/20** **FALL BREAK**

**11/27** Work/study/ and question answer session

**12/4** **Full Score Due by Wednesday December 4 @ 11:50, Friday December 6 will be used to discuss necessary changes to the scores.**

**Final Project Recording Session –TBA**

## Course Evaluation

Your grade will be based on the following percentages

| | |
|---|---|
| Homework | 75% |
| Written Final | 20% |
| Attendance | 5% |

## Grading Scale

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 93-100% | = A | Superior |
| 90-92% | = A- | |
| 87-89% | = B+ | Excellent, above average |
| 83-86% | = B | |
| 80-82% | = B- | |
| 77-79% | = C+ | Average |
| 73-76% | = C | |
| 70-72% | = C- | |
| 67-69% | = D+ | Below average |
| 63-66% | = D | |
| 60-62% | = D- | |
| 0-59% | = F | Failing |

**Other Information Students with Disabilities Persons** who wish to request disability-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center in the Learning Commons, Lower Library, 826-4678 (voice) or 826- 5392 (TDD). Some accommodations may take up to several weeks to arrange. http://www.humboldt.edu/disability/

**Add/Drop policy Students** are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes.
http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/students/regulations/schedadjust.html

**Emergency Evacuation** please review the evacuation plan for the classroom (posted on the orange signs), and review http://www.humboldt.edu/emergencymgmtprogram/evacuation_procedures.php
for information on campus Emergency Procedures.
During an emergency, information on campus conditions can be found at: 826-INFO or
www.humboldt.edu/emergency

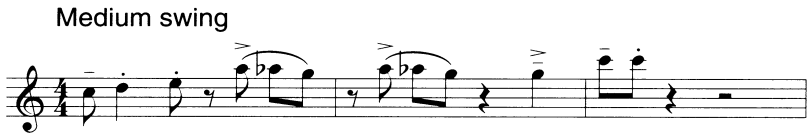
**Academic Honesty** - Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty:
http://www2.humboldt.edu/studentrights/academic-honesty
or
http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/

**Attendance and Disruptive Behavior Students** are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance and disruptive behavior:
http://www2.humboldt.edu/studentrights/attendance-behavior/

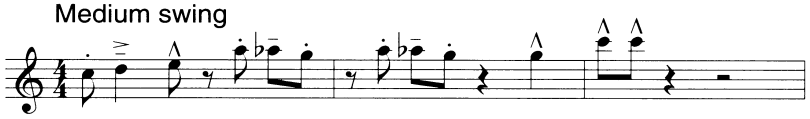
# APPENDIX I

**MUS 320b Course Description, p. 10**

group of musicians, such as a big band. With many musicians involved in the performance of rhythmically active music, it is imperative that note lengths and rhythmic figures be unambiguous in their notation.

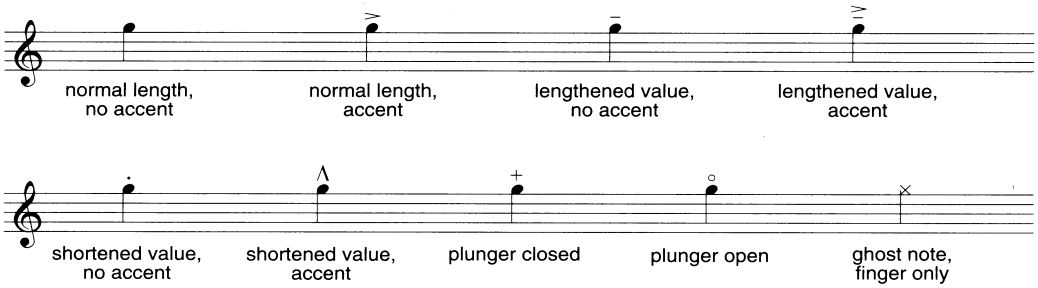



**Example 1.10a.** Melody with two different articulation indications.




**Example 1.10b**

Fortunately jazz articulation symbols are somewhat standardized and understood by most jazz musicians. A good arranger will show note articulations in every phrase of the arrangement.




**Example 1.11.** Standardized jazz articulations.

**Conclusion.** A lead sheet's rhythmic material (melodic and harmonic) will probably have to be rewritten extensively. Take care to keep the music moving forward through the use of syncopation. Precise jazz articulation is imperative in order to achieve a unified ensemble sound.

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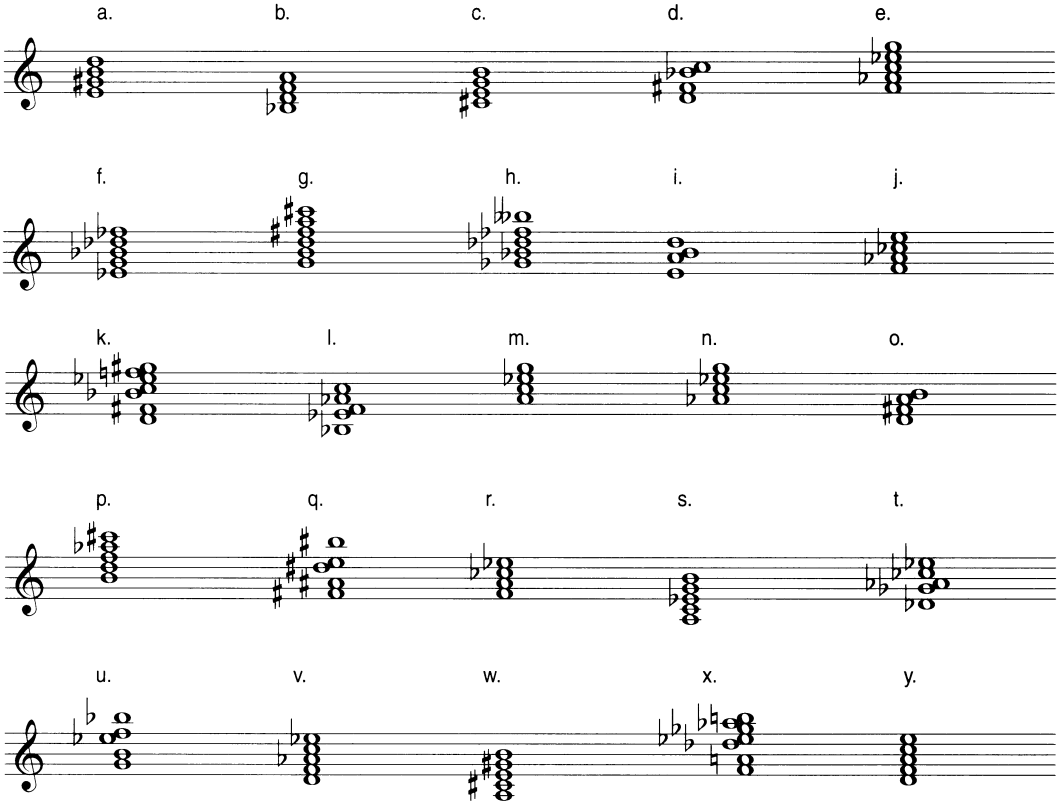
# Exercises

1. Spell each of the following major-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. EMA7
   b. F♯MA9
   c. DMA7(♯11)
   d. B♭MA6
   e. A6/9

f. E♭MA6
g. C♯MA7
h. FMA9(♯11)
i. B
j. G6/9

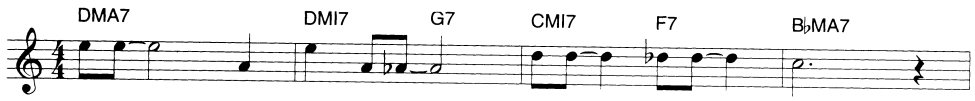
2. Spell each of the following minor-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. E♭MI7
   b. FMI9
   c. D♭MI11
   d. AMI6
   e. A♭MI(MA7)
   f. DMI6
   g. BMI7
   h. EMI11
   i. B♭MI
   j. G♭MI6
3. Spell each of the following dominant-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. D13
   b. E7
   c. B7(♯11)
   d. A♭9
   e. G7(♭9)
   f. D♭+7
   g. B♭7(♭5)
   h. E♭7(♯9♯11)
   i. A+7(♯9)
   j. G♭9
   k. C♯7ALT
   l. A+7(♯11)
   m. D♭13
   n. F♯7(♯11)
   o. D7(♯9♯11)
   p. E♭9
   q. F+7(♭9)
   r. G9(♯11)
   s. A♭7ALT
   t. A7(♭9♯9)
4. Spell each of the following minor 7th flat 5-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. EMI7(♭5)
   b. F♯MI7(♭5)
   c. DMI9(♭5)
   d. B♭MI9(♭5)
   e. AMI9(♭5)
   f. C♯MI7(♭5♭9)
   g. FMI9(♭5)
   h. BMI7(♭5)
   i. GMI7(♭5)
   j. E♭MI11(♭5)

5. Spell each of the following diminished-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. E♭°7
   b. F°7
   c. D♭°7
   d. A°(MA7)
   e. A♭°7(MA9)
   f. D°(MA7)
   g. B°7(MA9)
   h. E°7
   i. B♭°7
   j. G♭°(MA7)
6. Spell each of the following dominant suspended-family chords. Use one staff.
   a. E7sus4
   b. F♯9sus4
   c. D13sus4
   d. B♭7sus4
   e. A13sus4
7. Provide the appropriate chord symbols for each of the following chords.

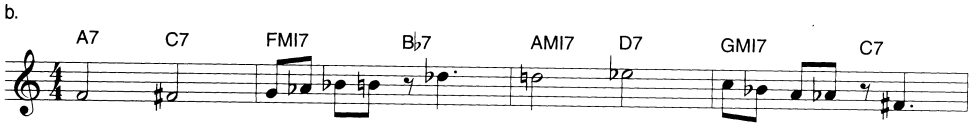


8. Complete the implied chord symbol indication for each of the following melodies. Basic chord symbol indication is written.

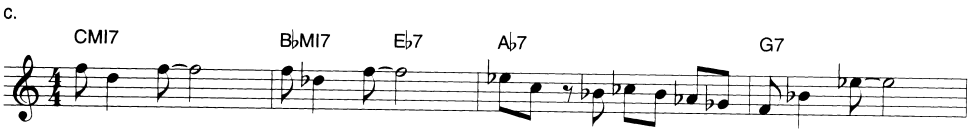
a.



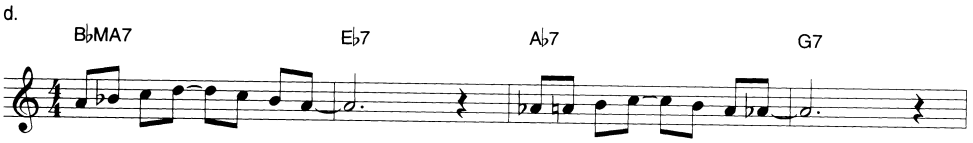

b.



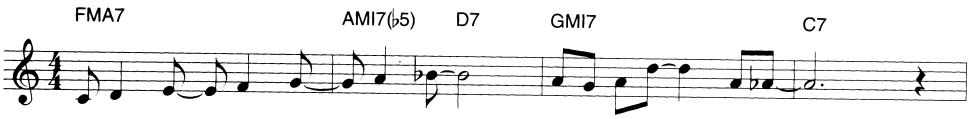

c.




d.

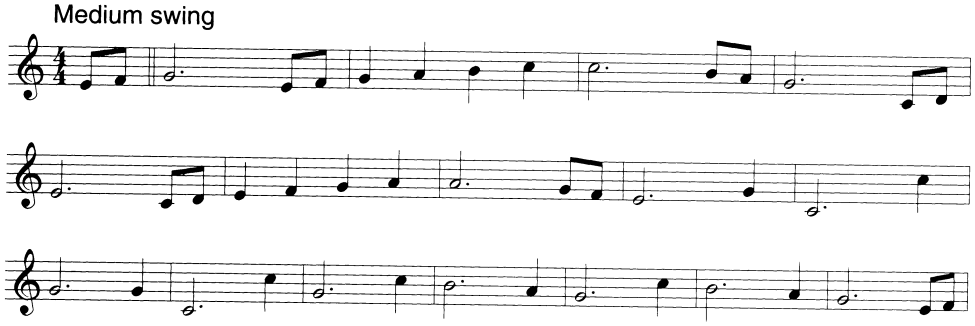



e.




9. For each melody provide two rhythmic variations.

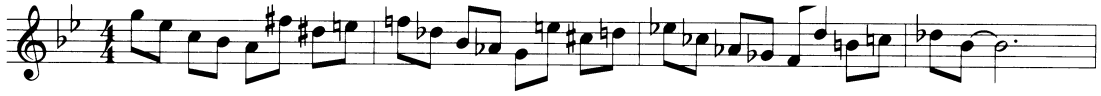
a.



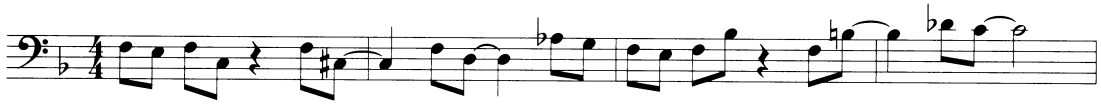

"My Romance"

## Exercises

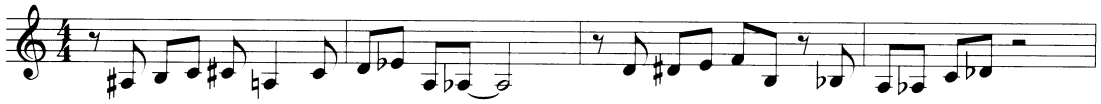
1. Transpose the following concert parts to instrument pitch.
   a. For (i) alto saxophone and (ii) trumpet.



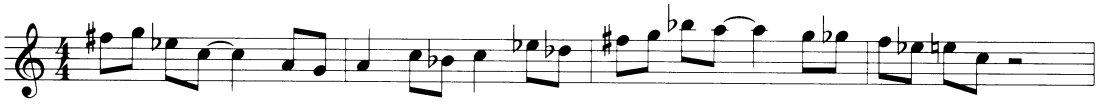
   b. For (i) baritone saxophone and (ii) guitar.



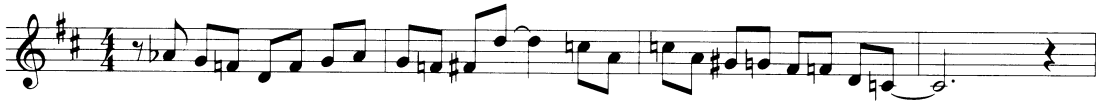
   c. For (i) trombone and (ii) tenor saxophone.



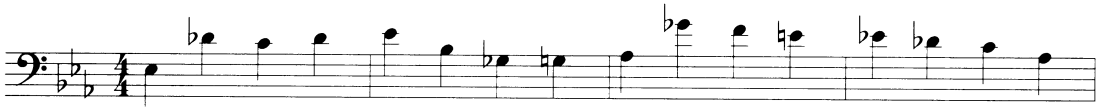
2. Transpose the following instrument parts to concert pitch.
   a. Soprano saxophone



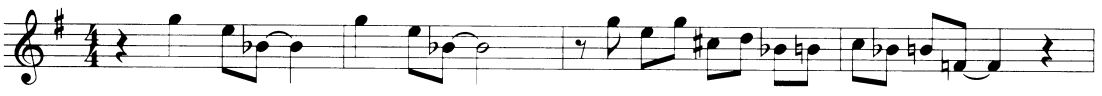
   b. Tenor saxophone



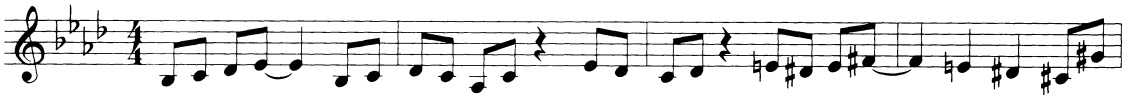
   c. Bass



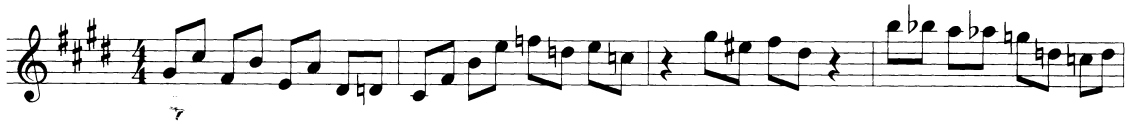
3. Transpose from one instrument part to another.
   a. From tenor saxophone to trombone part



b. From trumpet to baritone saxophone part



c. From guitar to alto saxophone part

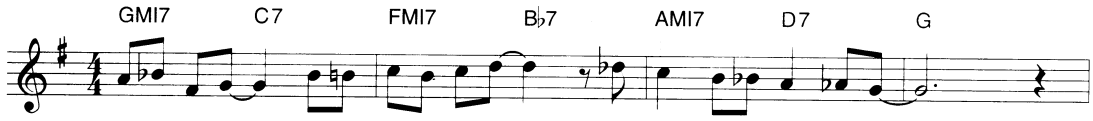


4. Listen to a number of jazz recordings that make use of a large ensemble, typically those that contain at least five horns. Throughout the selections identify the different unison or octave instrumental combinations. Develop listening skills that will enable you to isolate every instrument at any given point in a recording, and try to transcribe it.

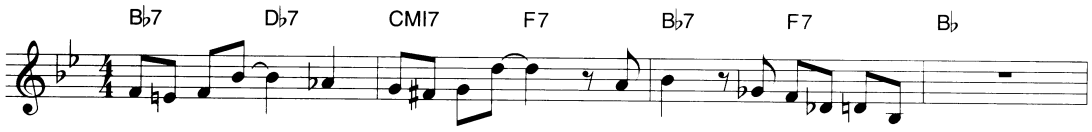
## Exercises

1. Harmonize each of the following four melodies for saxophone section. Use four-part, doubled-lead voicing, close or semi-open position. Indicate approach notes. Score two different versions of each melody by using different approach techniques.

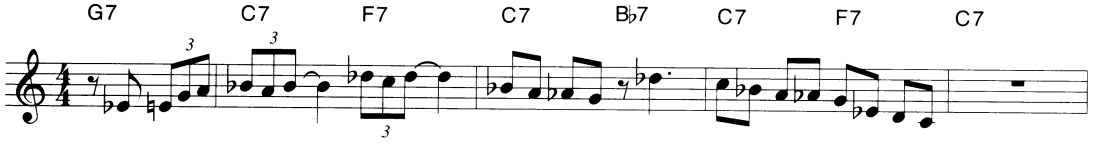
a.



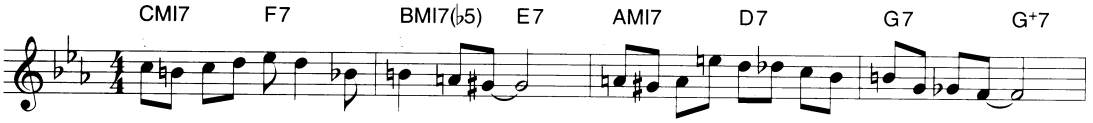

b.




c.




d.




2. Locate other tunes that contain a large number of approach notes. Practice harmonizing them in different ways by using different approach techniques.
3. Study saxophone solis in published scores. Determine which approach techniques are used most often.

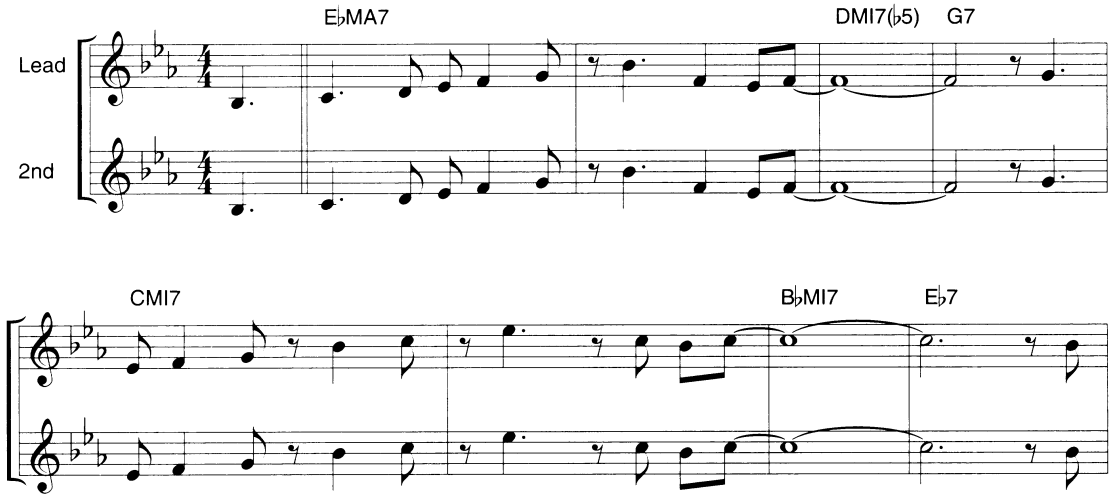
# APPENDIX II

# Chapter 3
# General Voicing Techniques

In arranging for jazz ensembles, a variety of harmonic realizations, or voicing options, exist for both melodic and support material. Arrangers must make the often difficult decisions about the degree of thickness or *density* appropriate to each separate melodic section of an arrangement (and corresponding harmonic material). The density may be very thin, very thick, or somewhere in between. Each voicing method discussed below has distinct advantages in certain situations. In order to add variety to an arrangement, an arranger will often include several of the following voicing methods in a single work.

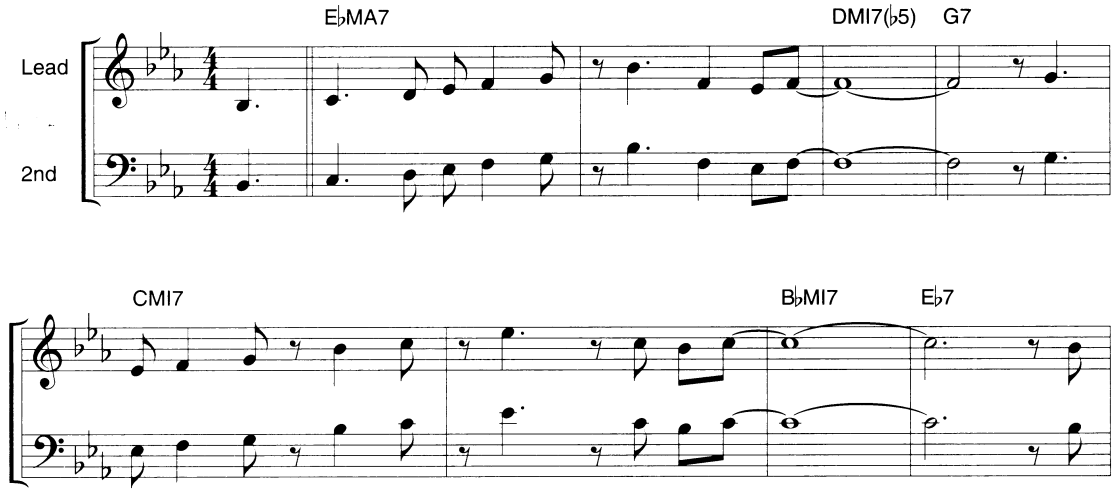
## Unison and Octave Voicings

*Unison voicing* is the least dense method of arranging melodic material. Unison occurs when the same musical material is assigned to more than one instrument at the exact same pitch level.




**Example 3.1** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—unison voicing.

*Octave voicing* is only slightly more dense than the unison sound. Octaves occur when an instrument duplicates another instrument's material at a pitch level that is an octave (or two) above or below the first instrument's pitch level.




**Example 3.2** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—octave voicing.

Unison or octave voicings are ideal ways to present primary material—such as an arrangement's first melodic statement—that the arranger wants to make sure the listener hears clearly. No additional pitches compete with, and perhaps obscure, those of the melody. And, too, whenever a number of instruments play the exact same melodic line, the dynamic level will be fairly loud, thus ensuring that the listener will hear the melodic line. An arranger may also use unison or octave voicings when

1. Writing individual melodic lines that combine to produce *counterpoint*
2. Presenting a basic harmonic outline through a *guide-tone line*
3. Presenting a full-ensemble *shout section* (also known as an "arranger's chorus").

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The disadvantage of using unison or octave voicings lies in their simplicity. Jazz is a colorful music. While classical, rock, and country music often use chords that contain few pitches (three), jazz chords contain many pitches (four or five). In other words, it is the rich sound of individual chords that help identify jazz music as such—and to use unison voicing throughout an arrangement negates an integral characteristic.

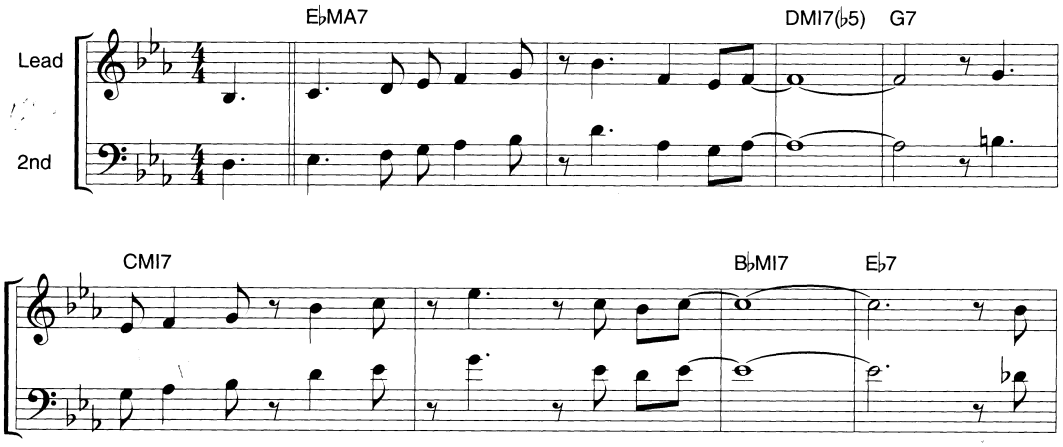
## Two-Part Voicings

*Two-part voicing* is a fairly thin texture. It occurs when an instrument duplicates another instrument's material at a harmonic interval other than 0 or 8—in other words, other than in unison or at an octave interval. It is more interesting than unison or octave voicings because of the presence of a primal element of harmony, specifically, simultaneous lead and support. Two-part voicing using 3rds or 6ths below the lead is very common. The use of perfect 4ths below the lead is less common, and 5ths, 2nds, and 7ths below the lead are almost never used in jazz. Harmonization may also occasionally occur above the given lead part, usually at intervals of 3rds, 4ths, or 6ths.

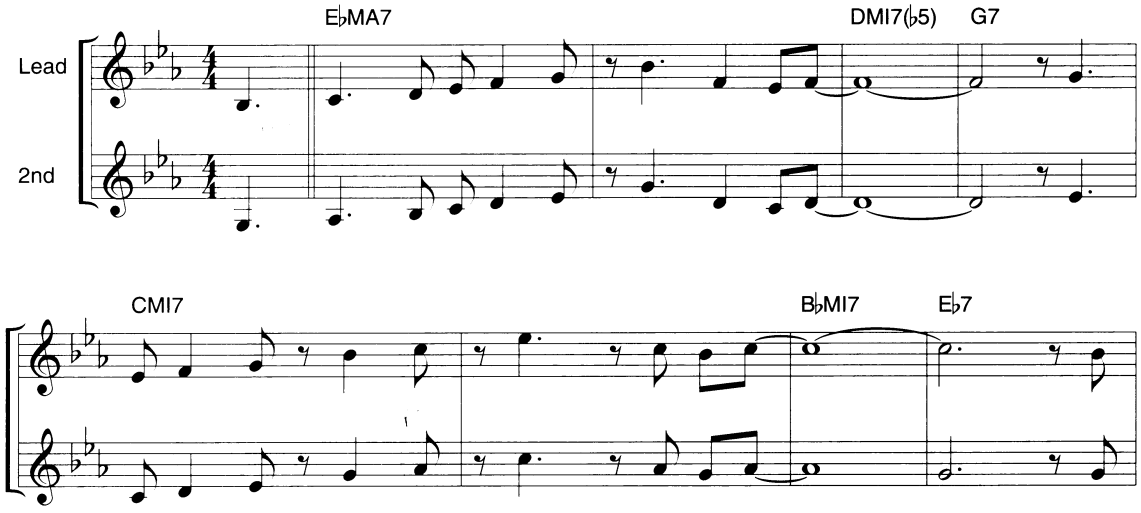
As with unison or octave voicings, two-part voicing is an ideal way to present primary material very clearly. More than a nice alternative to unison or octave voicings, two-part voicing imparts a sense of musical sophistication.

Whenever the arranger wants an element of harmony, it is best to add a defining chord tone beneath the given lead note. In other words, in order for the listener to recognize the underlying harmony, it is always best if the second, or harmonic, part incorporates a chord's 3rd or 7th; this ensures that the listener hears essential information about the underlying harmony. For example, the use of a chord's 3rd as the second, or supporting, pitch in a harmony part will tell the listener if a chord is major or minor.

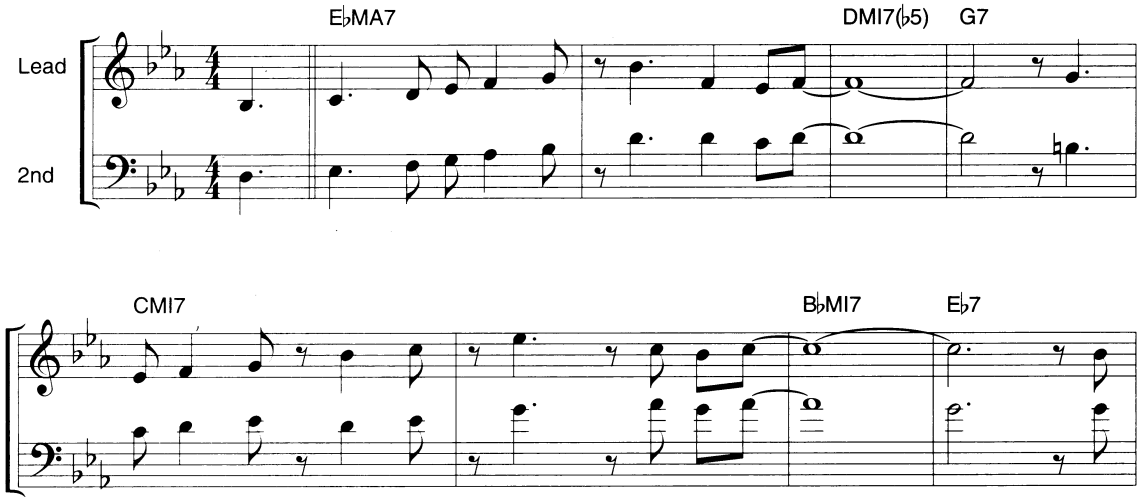
This method is usually impractical, however, within a two-part melodic presentation, especially when a rhythmically active melody line requires harmonization. In this case the prolonged use of a specific harmonic interval written beneath the melody usually takes precedence over the use of a correct harmony note on a note-by-note basis. Obviously, with this two-part writing, it is highly unlikely that the supporting part will completely outline the tune's chord progression. However, the overall sound of the two-part presentation will be very satisfying. Therefore, it is best to think of two-part writing simply as an enhanced melodic writing technique, rather than as any type of harmonic exercise.




**Example 3.3a** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures). Two-part voicing (6ths).




**Example 3.3b** Two-part voicing (3rds).

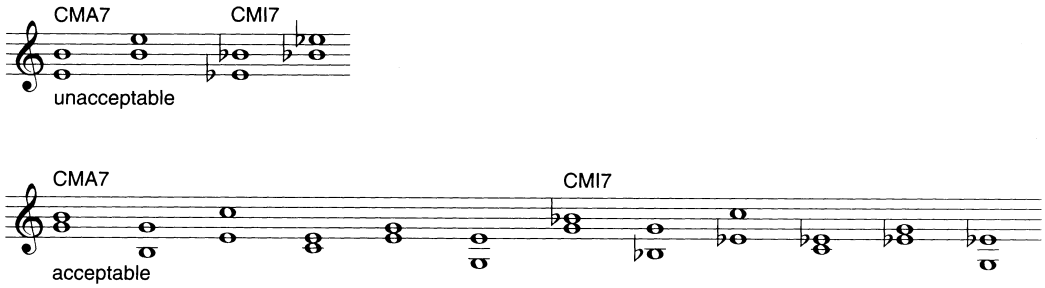



**Example 3.3c** Two-part voicing (6ths and 3rds).

Although the constant use of harmonic 6ths or 3rds in the first two examples sounds fine, a few harmonic problems arise. Should an A♭ be used in prominent places over an E♭MA7 or CMI7 sound? As illustrated in the third example, the arranger avoids this problem by alternating the use of harmonic 6ths and 3rds. However, while the overall presentation still sounds fine, repeated notes somewhat hamper the second instrument's rhythmic mobility. Depending on the instrumental combination, this may be more or less noticeable.

The arranger may also use two-part voicing to present secondary, or support, material—using the same method of incorporating a chord's 3rd and 7th when voicing any chord. However, by adhering strictly to this rule, a two-part voicing of basic major 7th or minor 7th chords will result in the formation of perfect 4ths or 5ths—not an ideal jazz sound! (In contemporary fusion or modal tunes, however, this type of voicing is good.) A dominant 7th chord will yield the interval of an augmented 4th (or diminished 5th). Therefore, it may be best if the arranger uses only one defining

chord tone along with either the 5th or root; this will result in the formation of 3rds and 6ths, an acceptable sound for outlining support material.



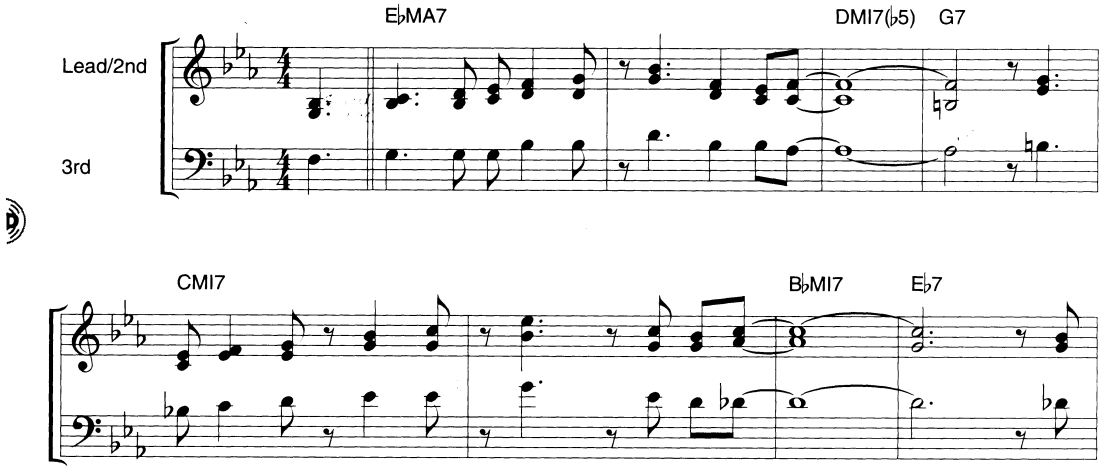

**Example 3.4** Possible two-part voicings for MA7 and MI7 chords.

Traditionally the harmonic interval does not exceed an octave in two-part voicing. One common exception is the use of a compounded 3rd (for example, a 10th).

## Three-Part Voicings

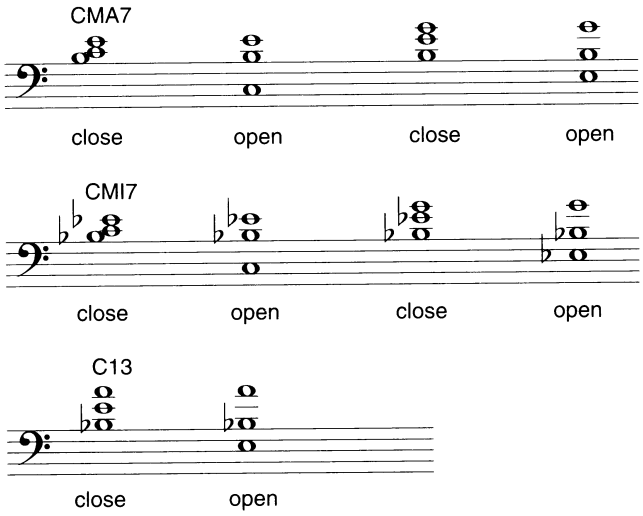
*Three-part voicing* imparts to the listener a true sense of harmony; this is especially true when voicing background material. Additionally, when the arranger uses this voicing technique to present primary material, the idea of *thickened melody* becomes evident.

Three-part voicing dictates that two additional pitches be placed beneath the given lead note. With certain lead notes, it is possible to use both the chord's 3rd and 7th to harmonize the lead note. At other times, in order to avoid unwanted elements of *dissonance,* only one of the defining chord tones can be placed beneath the lead note; in this instance the 5th or root may serve as the other harmony note. It should be noted that the use of three-part voicing may result in an abundance of triadic structures and, therefore, may not impart a true jazz sound. This situation can be avoided by incorporating an interval of a major or minor 2nd into a three-part voicing.




**Example 3.5** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—three-part voicing.

Traditionally it is desirable in three-part voicing that the harmonic intervals between adjacent notes be relatively similar. Regular intervals usually will result from a close-position, three-note structure. If the arranger uses an open-position, three-note structure (usually attained by dropping the middle note of a close-position chordal structure down one octave), the resulting chord may sound unbalanced. This unbalanced effect is likely to intensify when dissimilar instruments, such as trumpets and saxophones, play the individual notes of the chord.



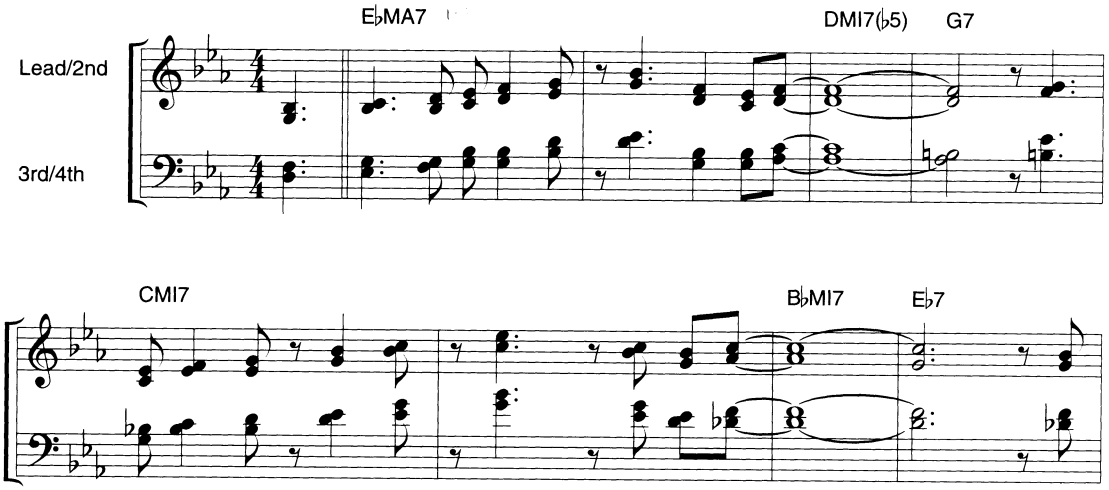

**Example 3.6** Three-part voicings—close and open position.

## Four- and Five-Part Voicings

Although four- and five-part voicings are fairly dense harmonically, they tend to define the true big-band sound and, hence, are the most recognizable and most used voicings within the idiom. Although more pitches come into play, working with four- and five-part harmony is actually a fairly uncomplicated process. Because jazz chords usually contain four or five different pitches, a complete chord sound is easy to structure and communicate to the listener.

These two techniques of voicing chords usually guarantee the inclusion of both the 3rd and 7th of a chord, although an awkward lead note may occasionally cause an arranger to omit one or the other. For example, if the root of a major 7th chord appears in the melody, it is best to include the chordal 6th in the voicing (in place of the chordal 7th) in order to avoid a very dissonant clash around the lead note. Additionally, it is not always necessary to include the root or 5th of the chord in a four-part voicing; the arranger can substitute the 9th or 13th, respectively.

Rhythmically active melodic writing often demands four-part voicing in close position. Within this close-position voicing, contemporary writing usually dictates the presence of the interval of a 2nd (major or minor) within the overall structure. The inclusion of this interval imparts a tinge of dissonance, or *grind,* to the overall sound of the voicing.




**Example 3.7** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—four-part voicing (close position).

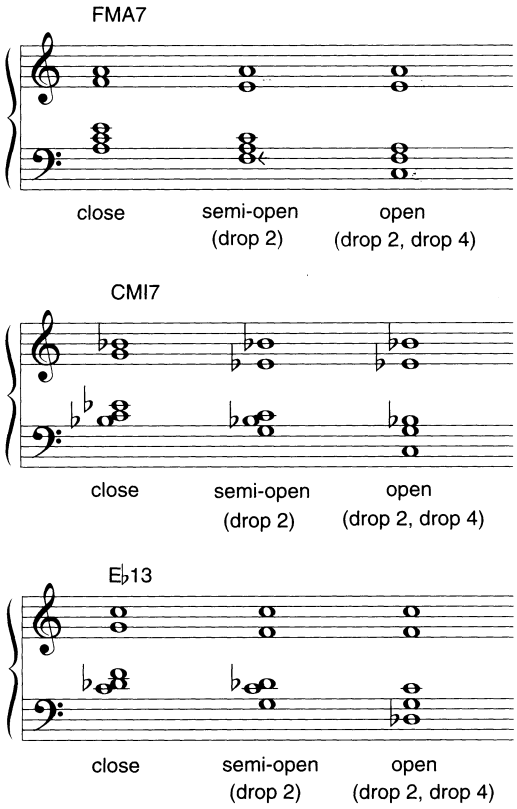
Support material voiced in four parts may also make use of close position, although other alternatives, namely, semi-open position, open position, and spread position, occur frequently. Before discussing these alternative positions, however, we will define the different interpretations of exactly what constitutes a four- or five-part voicing.

Although the term "four-part" would seem to explicitly define the number of pitches contained in the voicing, it is not unusual to find five distinct pitches in a four-part voicing technique. The extra pitch in such a voicing is an additional lead note, placed one octave beneath the original. Hence the voicing contains five different sounds, but only four pitch names. This is perhaps the most used voicing in big-band writing. It is referred to as *four-part, doubled-lead.* Writers favor this voicing because it reinforces the melodic line in a rather unobtrusive manner.

Common positioning techniques for four-part, doubled-lead voicings are

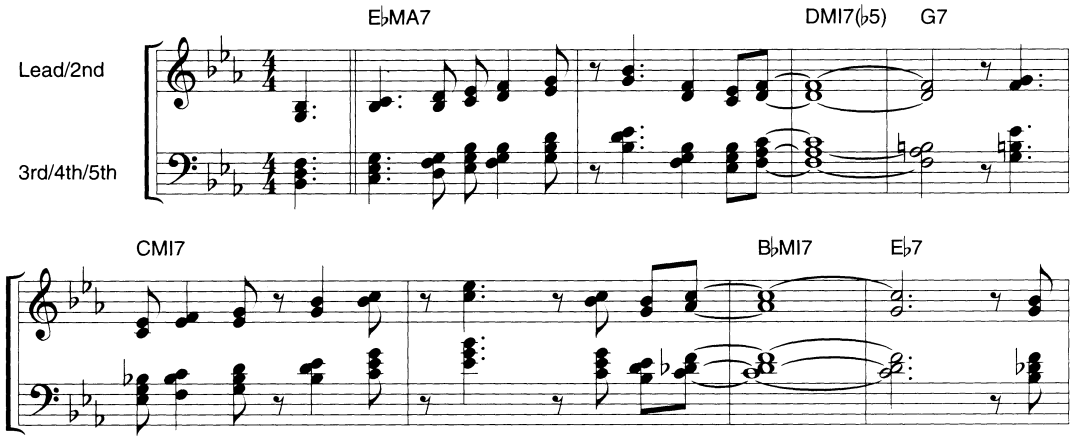
1. Close, within one octave—the lead voice is duplicated one octave lower; the remaining three pitches are placed between the two lead notes
2. Semi-open, or *four-part, doubled-lead, drop 2*—the close position as described above, but with the second-from-top voice dropped down one octave
3. Open, or *four-part, doubled-lead, drop 2 and 4*—the close position as first described, but with both the second-from-top voice *and* the fourth-from-top voice dropped down one octave. The range spread in this last position is almost two octaves.

Lastly, any chord structure voiced to go beyond a two-octave range is called *spread;* spread voicings are more commonly used with true five-part harmony.

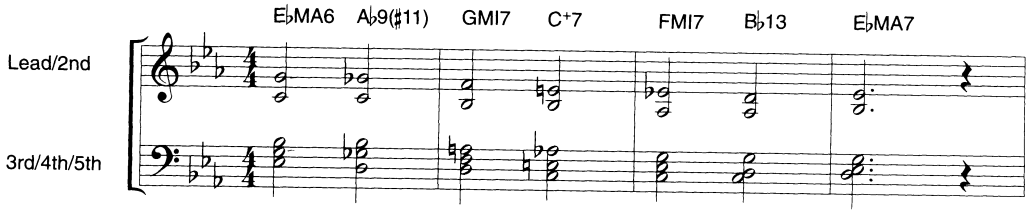



**Example 3.8** Four-part, doubled-lead voicings—close, semi-open, and open position.

As a voicing's range grows wider, its degree of mobility reduces. Hence, for a rhythmically active melody, it is advisable to use four-part, doubled-lead voicing in close position rather than open. Conversely, in a ballad or with slow-moving background material, semi-open or open-position voicing may impart a more lush or effective sound than would close-position.



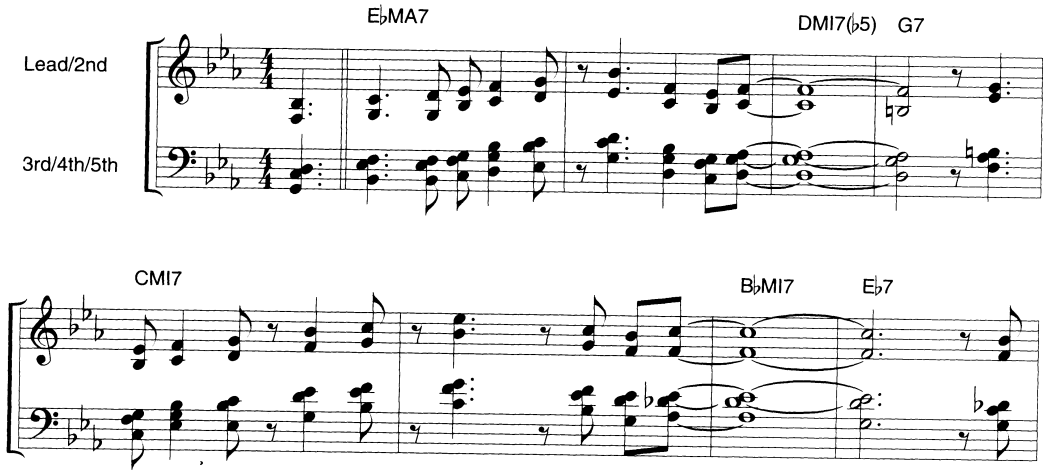

**Example 3.9a "There Will Never Be Another You"** First 8 measures. Four-part, doubled-lead voicing (close position).




**Example 3.9b** Last 4 measures. Support material—four-part, doubled-lead voicing (semi-open position).

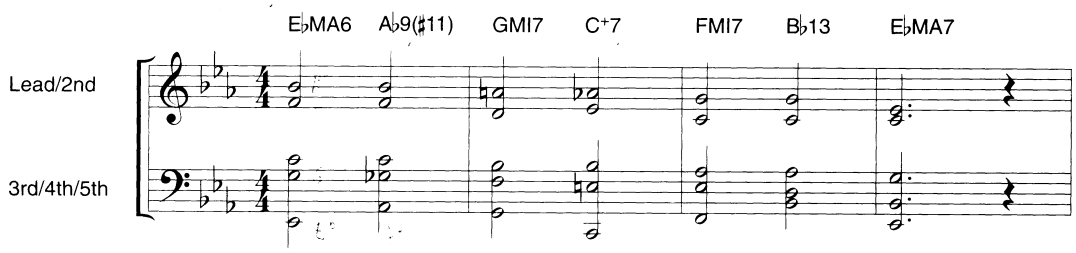
Of course, a four-part voicing may be a true four-part voicing (that is, a doubled lead is not present) and contain only four distinct pitches. As mentioned above, the use of close position is desirable for a rhythmically active melody line, while open position is fine for harmonizing support material. However, as in the case of three-part voicing techniques, harmonic intervals formed between adjacent notes of the voicing should be relatively similar to one another. This type of regular intervallic structure will help to avoid any perception of harmonic imbalance.

Five distinct pitches are found in five-part voicing. Although this voicing technique may yield colorful sounds, its overall density may tend to tire the listener. Additionally, because of the lack of a doubled-lead, the harmony notes of the voicing may obscure the lead.




**Example 3.10** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—five-part voicing (semi-open position).

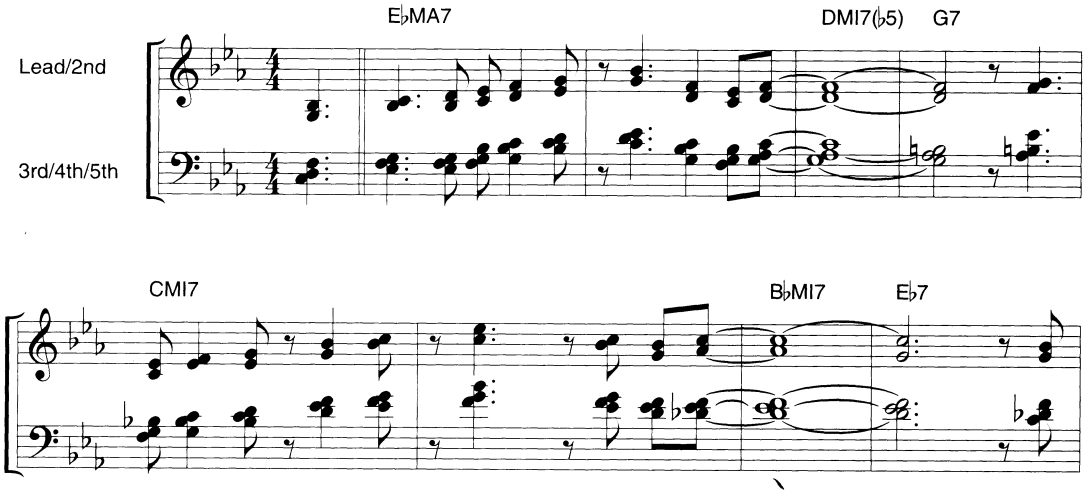
The most obvious position for a five-part voicing is the spread. This is particularly true for the presentation of support material. Here the bottom voice is always the root of the chord, and the 3rd, 7th, and two color tones are the other constituents. The spread voicing should emulate the natural *overtone series,* placing wide intervallic spacings between the adjacent pitches at the bottom of the voicing and narrower intervallic spacings at the top. The arranger should place the chord's structural pitches at the bottom of the voicing and the color tones at the top.




**Example 3.11** "There Will Never Be Another You" (last 4 measures), support material—five-part voicing (spread position).

Take care when writing a five-part voicing in either semi-open or open position. There is a good possibility that after dropping the second voice (or second and fourth voices), a tension will end up beneath the defining chord tones and result in a dissonant interval. This is not always an acceptable sound.

The use of close position (all five pitches within one octave) actually produces a desirable sound. With certain types of basic 7th chords (that is, major and minor), close-position voicing will yield a cluster. Here two or three intervals of a 2nd are present within the voicing, while the lead note is usually a 3rd above its neighbor.



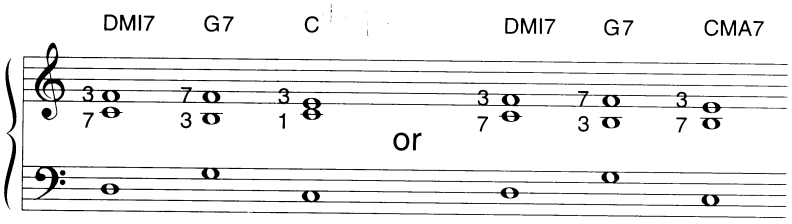

**Example 3.12** "There Will Never Be Another You" (first 8 measures)—five-part voicing (close position).

## Voice Leading

Voice leading is the process of correctly resolving a chord's active or *tendency* tones (usually the 3rd and 7th of a functional chord).

We can easily observe voice leading in jazz by looking at the ii7–V7–I chord progression. The 7th of the ii7 chord resolves to the 3rd of the V7 chord, and the 3rd of the ii7 chord remains stationary (becoming the 7th of the V7 chord). The 7th of the V7 chord resolves to the 3rd of the I chord; the 3rd of the V7 chord either resolves to the root of the tonic chord or remains stationary (becoming the major 7th of the I chord, if desired).

An arranger should always be aware of this type of basic voice leading, especially when scoring slow-moving support material—or any type of material that is not a *thickened melody.* Players and listeners will perceive a harmonization that consistently ignores the resolution requirements of a chord's tendency tones as awkward and disjunct.

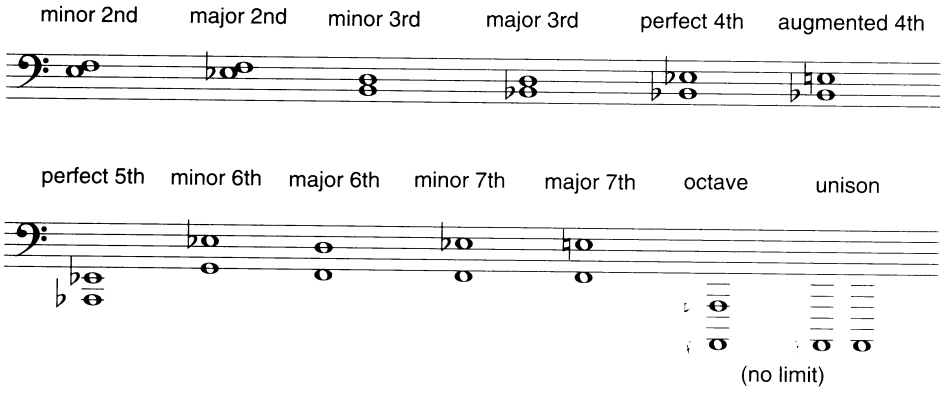



**Example 3.13** Voice leading in the ii7–V7–I chord progression.

## Safe Low Limits

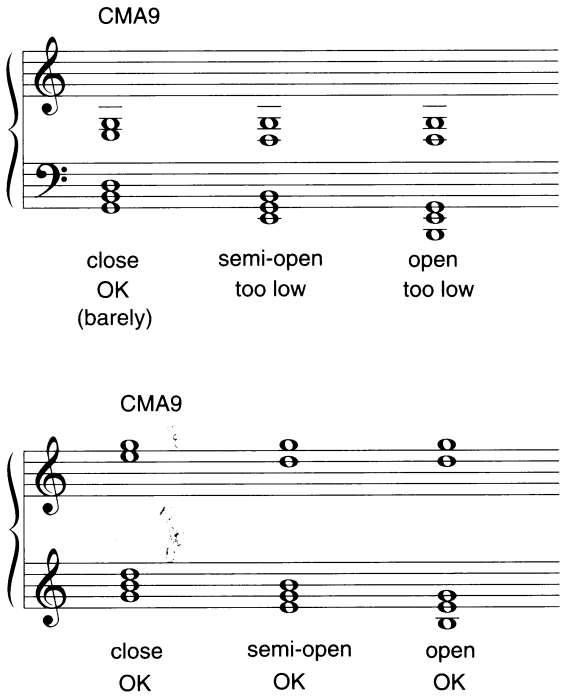
The aural integrity of a chord may be jeopardized and will sound muddy when its structure contains intervals that lie beneath a certain point on the keyboard. Because of the limitations of the human ear, we can hear clearly only those intervals in a particular range.

Generally speaking, safe low limits correspond closely to the intervallic makeup of the natural overtone series. In other words, octaves and perfect 5ths are easily heard, even when played quite low. Conversely, intervals of 2nds and 3rds are not.




**Example 3.14** Safe low limits.

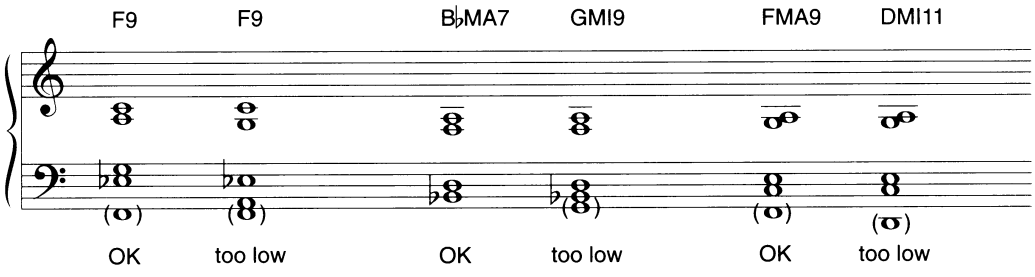
While safe low limit problems probably will not arise whenever spread voicings are utilized (because they emulate the natural overtone series in their intervallic spacing), care must be taken as to the kind of voicing position employed when the lead note falls below middle C. Hence, the lower the lead note, the tighter the voicing. A fairly low lead note of G below middle C (over a CMA7 chord in four-part, doubled-lead voicing) will demand that a close position be used. If the same lead note is placed two octaves higher, a semi-open or open voicing may be desirable (of course, a close position voicing will still sound fine).




**Example 3.15** Loss of chordal clarity because of position.

Therefore, an arranger should be aware of all intervallic relationships contained in every voicing and ensure that, when isolated, all intervals are accurately heard. It takes only one interval lying below a safe low limit to distort or blur the sound of the entire voicing.

When checking for safe low limits, it is important to place the root of the chord under a rootless voicing. The root is not explicitly stated but is implied in the chord's overall voicing and will contribute to the overall sound. In any case, it is well to assume that the bass will probably play the root and will be heard.




**Example 3.16** Superimposed root.

**Conclusion.** In order to methodically manipulate the harmonic density of primary and secondary material within a big-band arrangement, an arranger must be familiar with various voicing techniques and the benefits that each provides in terms of mobility, resonance, tension, and clarity.

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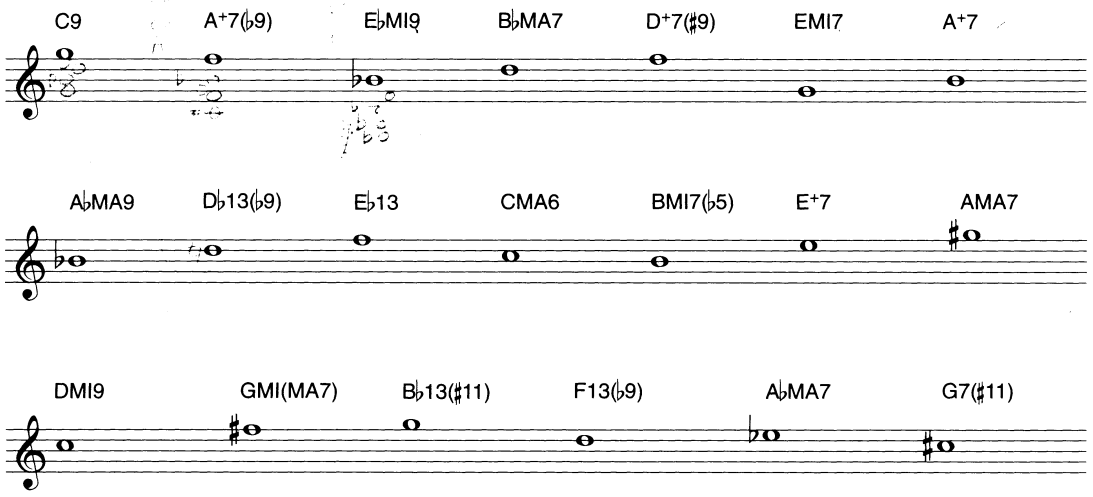
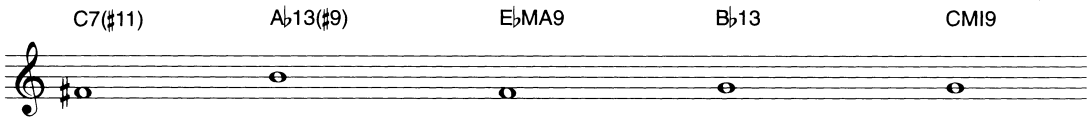
## Exercises

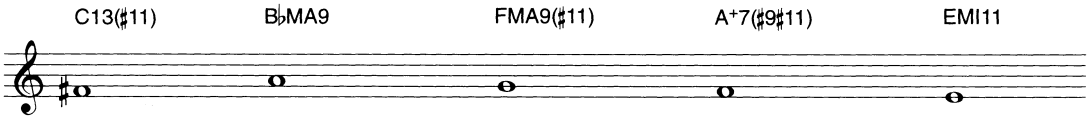
1. Harmonize each of the following lead notes with a four-part, doubled-lead voicing in (a) close position, (b) semi-open position, and (c) open position. Where possible, use a rootless voicing.



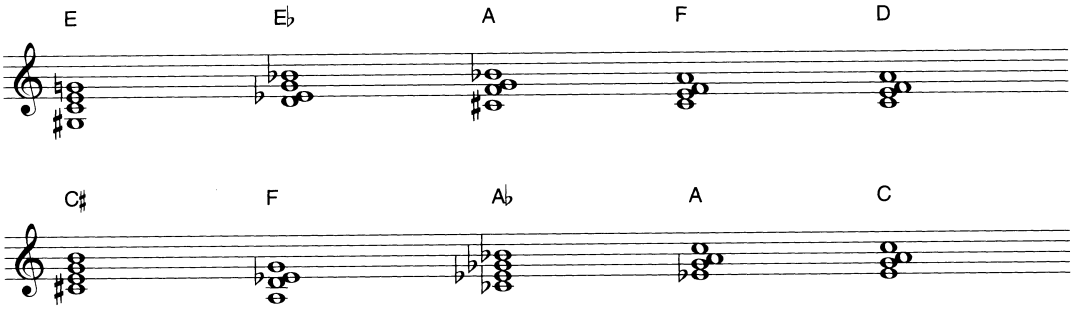

2. Harmonize each of the following lead notes with a five-part spread voicing.



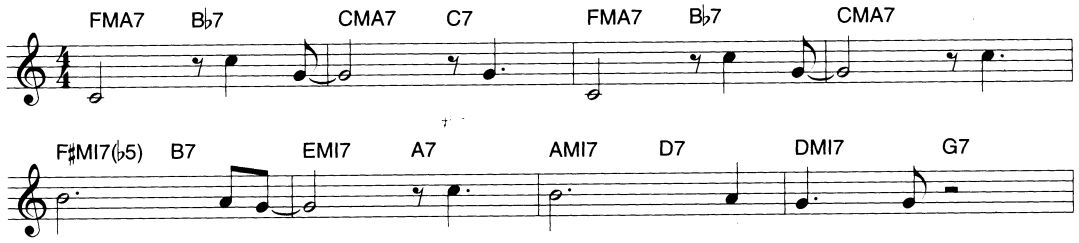

3. Harmonize each of the following lead notes with a five-part cluster voicing.



4. Assign a chord symbol to each of the following four-part, close position voicings. A partial chord symbol (root only) is provided.

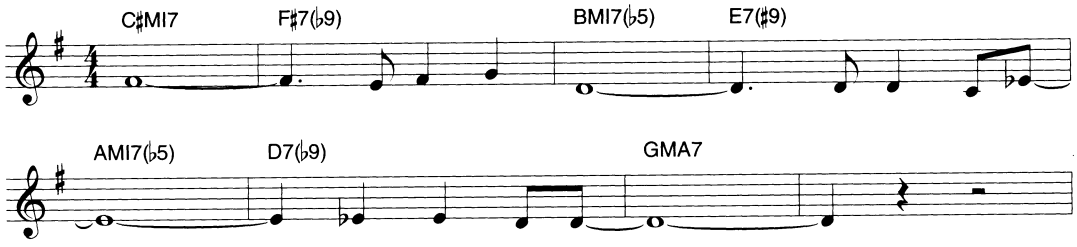



5. Harmonize the excerpt from "My Romance" with (a) two-part voicing, (b) three-part voicing (close position), and (c) four-part voicing (close position).




"My Romance"

6. Harmonize the excerpt from "Stella by Starlight" with (a) two-part voicing, (b) three-part voicing (close position), and (c) four-part voicing (close position).




"Stella by Starlight"